

Activities Tool Kit: Storm Drain Stenciling Event

How-to Guidance

Overview

A storm drain stenciling event is a method to provide public outreach utilizing children, students, or adult volunteers. Storm drain stenciling could be performed by local camps, schools, volunteer organizations, or businesses in targeted neighborhoods throughout a town or city. If children, local organizations, or businesses are involved, they can provide a draw for press coverage.

A key component in making your program effective is providing a watershed education program, like the **EnviroScape activity**, to volunteers before stenciling begins. See the How-to Guidance on the EnviroScape in the Activities Tool Kit. In addition, whenever possible, try to involve other members of the community. For instance, put up **door hangers** on homes in the neighborhood on the day of the stenciling. Another way to increase community awareness is to issue a **press release** before the event. Lastly, get **signed permission slips for children** before they participate in activities.

Storm drain stenciling is a great way to get attention and coverage of pet waste issues, and the outreach will leave a lasting mark! The stencil should stay on the ground for at least a few months so that every person who sees it will become more aware about their impacts on water pollution and storm drains.

Materials

Before Event:

- Media Advisory inviting press to attend event (See Media Tool Kit for example)
- Permission slips (example provided)

Storm drain Stenciling Event Day:

- Two to three adult volunteers for each group
- Storm drain observation recording chart (template provided) – one for each group
- Storm drain stencils – one or two for each group
- Maps with storm drains outlined (Dept. of Public Works will provide) – one for each group
- Spray paint or DPW line paint and paint buckets and brushes for under age nine – one for each group
- Clipboard for maps and observation chart – one for each group
- Pencils – one for each group
- Gloves – pair for each volunteer
- Safety vests (DPW may provide) – one for each volunteer/participant
- Traffic cones (DPW will provide) – two to three for each group
- Door hangers (example provided) – 20-30 for each group
- Broom and dustpan – one of each for each group
- First aid kit – one for each group
- Paper towels – roll for each group
- Hand cleaning solution – one for each group
- Garbage bags – one for each group
- Camera – one for event
- Transportation for volunteers

Optional

- Cooler, ice, and bottled water and maybe snacks for volunteers
- EnviroScape model or other visuals for stormwater education (information on available EnviroScapes to borrow and curriculum provided)
- Name tags

Method

1. **Before getting started: Contact the local department of public works** for assistance with your storm drain stenciling project. You will need their permission to apply the paint, and they are an essential partner for your program - possibly providing storm drain maps, traffic cones, safety vests, and additional guidance. Decide who you will target for your volunteers, i.e., school groups, scouts, clubs, camp groups, YMCA, businesses, volunteer organizations, after school groups, etc. Consider the ages that you would like to work with and can handle for the neighborhood size, number of storm drains you are trying to stencil, and the amount of time you will have with the volunteers.
2. **Planning your event:** Identify a contact person for the organization you want to target and meet with he/she to confirm interest in participation before going further. Use storm drain maps provided by the local DPW for planning your event. Consider allowing about ½ hour to ¾ hour for getting organized, stormwater education, and stenciling training. Time for actual stenciling depends on how far volunteers need to walk and their age. Arrange for chaperones to accompany each group of two to three children under the age of 16. Work with your volunteer group contact and plan a date as well as a rain date in case weather does not permit stenciling. Be sure to invite the media to attend (media advisory template provided).
3. **Stormwater pollution and pet waste awareness training:** You can provide education about stormwater pollution and pet waste on the day of stenciling or a date before the event. Please refer to the “How to Guidance on the EnviroScape” or “Additional Resources” provided for more information.
4. **Getting started:** On the stenciling day be sure to break the volunteers into groups of two to three people. Assign a chaperone or staff member to each group under age 16. Make sure each group has a kit with the necessary materials (paint, broom, dust pan, clip board, storm drain map, garbage bags, paper-towels, first aid kit, and traffic cones), and all members of the group are wearing vests. Demonstrate one storm drain stenciling procedure to the entire group, and go over helpful hints to stencil.
5. **Stenciling procedure:**
 - a. Locate your storm drain.
 - b. Place a traffic cone in the road to alert traffic of your presence.
 - c. Select the area that will be stenciled so that passersby will see it.
 - d. Record any observation on the observation chart.
 - e. Clear off debris and sand around the storm drain with your broom and dustpan.
 - f. Place the stencil on cleared area and spray it with the spray paint in a quick, even sweeping motion.
 - g. While stenciling is taking place, one or two of the group members can hang the door hangers on neighboring houses. Never allow children to approach doorways without supervision.
 - h. As each drain is completed, make a note on the map.

Summary

Storm drain stenciling can be a great way to raise awareness about pet waste in communities. There is potential for press coverage on the day of the event to raise awareness in the community, the volunteers learn about stormwater pollution, and the stenciling itself lasts! For months to come, people will be reminded that they can positively impact water quality by keeping storm drains as clean as possible by not dumping pollutants near or in them.